LABOUR MONTHLY

Founded 1921 Editor: R. Palme Dutt

FIGHT FOR LABOUR'S FUTURE

The Editor

TRADE UNIONS: STRATEGY FOR UNITY

John Ball

Sam Barr

John Copland

Tony McClelland

BORDER CLASHES & SOCIALISM

Quaestor

Guyana–The Truth, Cheddi Jagan

MAY 1969

3s. 6d.

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LABOUR MONTHLY

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VOL. 51 No. 5 MAY . 1969

CONTENTS

		Page
Notes of the Month: The Fight for Labour's Future. *Disintegration? No! Rebirth—Through Death to Life—Coalition of the Future—Class and Nation—You Cannot Serve Two Masters—Significance of Anti-Communism in the Labour Party—Wrecking the Labour Party from Within—The Fight for Working Class Democracy—Why Labour Governments Have Failed—Warning Lesson of 1931—Wilson Government's Suicidal Path—Beyond 1931—Hour for Action*	**R.P.D.**	193
Forty Years Ago. Trade Unions and Labour		204
Trade Unions: Strategy for Unity. Joint political-industrial action to win the battle against anti-union legislation	**John Ball**	205
The Mersey Sound that Wilson Doesn't Like. Merseyside prepares for May Day	**Tony McClelland**	208
Dundee Moves. Defence against Government and employers	**John F. Copland**	212
An 'Insulting' Suggestion		214
English Actress in Berlin. The flourishing world of theatre in the GDR	**Amelia Bayntun**	214
Pictures from Berlin Productions		216, 217
US Presidential Perquisites		218
Lenin on Wireless		219
Scorpio Cartoon		220
May Day Greetings		221
Clydeside in Action. Shop stewards unite to beat Government attack	**Sam Barr**	224
Border Clashes and Socialism. Far Eastern situation	**Quaestor**	226
Guyana—The Truth. Growing contradictions since the general election	**Cheddi Jagan**	228
Free University? Need for genuinely democratic forms of higher education	**Ron Bellamy**	231
Correspondence: Fifty years of world revolution	**Pat Sloan, R.P.D.**	234
Book Reviews: 'New Directions in Australian Foreign Policy', edited by Max Teichmann: *Judah Waten*; 'Monopoly and Restrictive Practices', G. C. Allen: *John Eaton*; 'The People's Republic', Obafemi Awolowo: *Idris Cox*; 'Captain Swing', E. J. Hobsbawm and George Rudé: *Margaret Bramley*; 'Selected Works of Marx and Engels'		236
Make Sure of It	**Nicola Seyd**	240
Publications Received		Inside back cover

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Notes of the Month

THE FIGHT FOR LABOUR'S FUTURE

> **'My own feeling is that if we are to challenge the Government in this matter we will most likely have to do it ourselves industrially. . . . It may well be that defence of our members' fundamental rights will have to be conducted in industry itself. If so, it will not be the first time that trade unionists have had to defy the law to ensure the survival of their organisations.'**
>
> JOHN BONFIELD, General Secretary of the National Graphical Association, Presidential Address to the Annual Conference of the Printing and Kindred Trades Confederation, April 9, 1969.

April 14, 1969

This May Day sees the gathering of a battle for the future of the British labour movement on a scale and with an intensity without precedent in the long and chequered record of the century of existence of the TUC or the seven decades of existence of its child, the Labour Party. On the one side, the narrow clique at present dominating the Labour Cabinet, constituted by Wilson, Stewart, Jenkins, Crossman and Barbara Castle, responsive only to the behests of High Finance, and heedless of the warning signals equally of electoral disasters and of every representative body of the labour movement, appears to be obstinately hellbent on the suicidal course of driving through the anti-union legislation demanded by their masters, and thus launching an offensive on the very foundations of the movement far graver than anything MacDonald attempted in 1931. On the other side the opposition is voiced, not only by the revolt from below, by the shop stewards, by union conference after conference, by the mass lobby of February 27 and the political strikes called for this May Day, but equally by the Trades Union Congress and its General Council, by the Labour Party Conference, by so wide a body of Labour MPs as to defeat attempts at discipline, and finally also by the Labour Party Executive with a 16 to 5 vote, including in the opposition majority, alongside the trade union representatives and the left, a Cabinet Minister participating as Treasurer of the Party, and with the newly elected Labour Party General Secretary (elected by union support against the nominee preferred by the dominant figures of the Cabinet) publicly proclaiming support of the dissenting Cabinet Minister and of the Executive majority's opposition vote.

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This is a situation without precedent. The battle which is now opening will determine the future for years ahead.

Disintegration? No! Rebirth

No wonder the limelight of the political commentators in the general press has begun to shift from the customary confinement to endless speculations on the comings and goings, the manoeuvres or counter-manoeuvres of individuals on the political scene, of a Callaghan or a Jenkins, a Brown or a Gunter. Larger issues have forced themselves to the forefront of attention, involving the whole future of the relations of the trade unions and the Labour Party, and of the relations of the organised trade union and labour movement to the present Labour Government and its policies. These issues are developing in the shadow of the impending local elections and the near approaching general election. They are developing in an economic situation of utter fiasco of the economic policies pursued by the Government, as demonstrated once again in the prospects of Mr. Jenkins' latest budget. They are developing in an international situation where President Nixon's significant initiative for 'unfreezing' the cold war and modifying Nato is having to overcome the obstructive tactics of the principal Nato cold war protagonists, represented by the London-Bonn axis, with Stewart and Healey in the forefront. Following the absolute deadlock revealed at the meeting of the Premier and Barbara Castle with the TUC General Council representatives on the planned anti-union legislation, press comment has begun to speculate on the 'disintegration' of the political labour movement, as expressed in the traditional links of the trade unions and the Labour Party. Not so fast. Certainly the present Government offensive is striking a blow at the foundations of the labour movement, and in consequence also at the traditional system whereby a Labour Party which officially repudiates the class struggle claims support from organisations founded for the purposes of the class struggle, the trade unions. Certainly the negative costs of this policy in the electoral field are heavy. But the positive feature is the strength of resistance of the organised labour movement to this offensive. This is a sign, not of weakness, but of health. The immediate path is still difficult. But in the present struggle against this offensive the conditions are gathering for that unity of the left, the unity of all fighters for socialism and the trade unions, which can alone mobilise the strength to transform the present situation and open a new political future for Britain.

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Through Death to Life

All over the world this Easter the most diverse races and creeds have been celebrating the ancient pagan festival of Nature's death and resurrection. The miracle of Easter is indeed the miracle of the dialectic. What is sick in the present stage of the labour movement is in truth dying. But more important is what is coming to life. The costs of the present disastrous policy of the Labour Government are heavy. They are spelled out in an electoral record of downfall without previous equal, with the toppling of ancient fortresses of Labour supremacy in one locality after another. Through the distorting mirror of the existing undemocratic electoral system, designed to ensure the permanence of the game of the Ins and the Outs, Labour discredit and loss of heart does still so far (owing to lack of development yet of a political alternative capable of contesting all seats) find reflection in a resulting advance of the long discredited Tories, so that in the last three by-elections popular discontent has been brilliantly expressed by the return of three Old Etonians to parliament. The costs have been shown in falling membership, decline in payment of the political levy, and loss of Labour canvassers and workers in the constituencies. While it would be hazardous to make any assumptions on the situation of a general election which might be theoretically nearly two years ahead, all present signs point to the prospect of a debacle comparable to 1931. It would need a very rapid advance indeed of the new forces to be able to change this prospect before the onset of the threatening general election. This is the heavy cost of the present Labour Government's policies. Nevertheless, this is not the whole picture. Marxism teaches always, never to confine attention to what is at the moment dominant and going down, but to concentrate the main attention on what is coming into being and advancing and represents the future.

Coalition of the Future

In the rising struggle against the present offensive the active mobilisation of the strength of the unions, and the co-operation of all elements of the left, communist and non-communist, of the political labour movement in association with the unions in this common battle, is already preparing the army of future victory. With characteristically blinkered vision *The Observer* editorial writer on April 6 considered the prospect of what he called

> an obscurantist coalition within the Labour movement: a coalition that is no less conservative for being made up of the traditional left-wing, on the one hand, and the trade unions on the other.

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Blind illusions. For it is precisely such a coalition, of the political left and the trade unions, which is already in process of development, and which, so far from being 'conservative', represents the future. Indeed, the formation of such a coalition may be regarded as the continuation in our day of the fight of the early socialists which led to the original creation of the Labour Party, when the early socialists, after years of battle, finally battered down the resistance of the right-wing leadership, and, in accordance with the advice first given by Engels, established the alliance of the socialists with the trade unions as the key to political advance in the conditions of Britain. The initial class character of this formation was in the early days officially proclaimed. During all the early years, until the victory of the Bolshevik revolution in 1917 brought the adoption of the aim of socialism by the Labour Party in 1918, the aim was defined, not in terms of an idea, socialism, but in terms of the class, to represent the interests of the working class. But this original class character was subsequently twisted out of shape, repudiated and betrayed by the right-wing leadership, with the consequent sorry record of the successive Labour Governments conducted on their 'classless' (i.e. capitalist) principles. Now, with the full light of this experience, and in the fiery furnace of the present struggle the conditions are gathering anew to build on stronger foundations the alliance of all fighters for socialism and the trade unions, to fulfil the aims which the original founders of the Labour Party had hoped to fulfil. Such a coalition, so far from being 'conservative' would represent the association of all that is progressive and strongest in the nation, to end the dismal record of chronic crisis of Britain equally under Tory and right-wing Labour governments, and lead the way to a new and happier future for the people and a worthier role for Britain in the world.

Class and Nation

The conflict which has now arisen springs from the contradiction at the heart of the present stage of development of the Labour Party. On the one hand, the Labour Party exists on the foundation of the class organisations of the workers, the trade unions, organising all workers, irrespective of political beliefs, on the basis of class solidarity for the pursuit of their common interests in the class struggle against the capitalist class. The trade unions comprise eight-ninths of the membership (5,539,562 affiliated trade union members in the return for 1967 at last year's Conference, alongside 733,932 individual members), and provide the greater part of the

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central funds. But the dominant central leadership up to the present date repudiates the theories of the class struggle, proclaims the political platform of the Labour Party to be based on classless political ideals corresponding to the interests of 'the community' in place of 'sectional class interests', and treats the actual basis in the trade unions as a sordid material necessity, with some of them from time to time dreaming dreams of discovering alternative sources of finance and thus freeing themselves from the distasteful obligation. Of course these dreams have in practice always remained pipe-dreams, since the more intelligent of these leaders very well understand that divorce from the trade unions would not only cut them off from their main source of finance, but would also cut them off from their main basis of popular support through the sense of working class solidarity, without which they would be nothing but a little bunch of liberal politicians, with no prospect save to undergo the fate of the Liberal Party.

You Cannot Serve Two Masters

This contradiction between the 'classless' politics of the top leadership and the actual class character of the Labour Party in its organisation and basis of support has governed the entire history of the Labour Party, the ceaseless conflict between the leadership and the rank and file, the unhappy record and outcome of successive Labour Governments, and today the present conflict, which represents the highest point yet reached in the battle. For there is no such thing as 'classless' politics. There is the politics of the capitalist class. And there is the politics of the working class and its allies. So-called 'classless' politics means in practice the politics of the capitalist class. Hence the idealist political leaders at the head of the Labour Party, proclaiming their gospel of ethical socialism above classes ('Methodism versus Marxism'), in practice, when they come into office, see no alternative save to carry out the policies and requirements of capitalism, which are very far from ethical or idealist, compel them to direct offensives against workers' rights and standards, and thus bring them into conflict with their own basis, the trade union basis of the Labour Party.

Significance of Anti-Communism in the Labour Party

It is for this reason that the question of the Communist Party, which it is otherwise conventionally fashionable to treat as 'insignificant' and 'negligible', has continuously played such a key role in the whole record of the Labour Party ever since the foundation

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of the Communist Party. For the Communist Party, based on Marxism, and with its strong basis in the industrial working class, in the factories and unions, is the political expression of working class politics, the antithesis of the basically anti-working class politics of the right-wing leadership. The early Marxists, who, through their Social Democratic Federation had participated, in accordance with the original advice of Engels, in the foundation of the Labour Party, with equal rights alongside the other founders, withdrew and lost their opportunity, through the bull-headed egotism and separatism of the basically Tory Hyndman at their head, and the sectarian trends of many of their members, failed to help in guiding the new alliance, and thereby handed over the Labour Party to the domination of the opportunists. When Marxism in Britain, on the basis of experience, began to overcome the old sectarian splitting traditions and combined to form a united Communist Party as an organ for the advance of the broad labour movement, with acceptance of the principle of affiliation to the Labour Party alongside constructive work in the trade unions, the right-wing leadership recognised the menace that this could mean to their domination, once the working class trend won majority support. Therefore they refused the affiliation, thus ending the old federal basis of the Labour Party as an alliance of socialists and the unions, and substituting a doctrinal basis of anti-working class politics. But the refusal of affiliation could only be the beginning, since the Communist Party is no outside body alien to the working class movement, but rooted in the industrial working class and the trade unions. According to the comic language of the right-wing leadership, a Tom Mann, Pollitt or Gallacher would be accused by an Attlee or a Gaitskell of 'infiltrating' the trade unions. Thus the initial refusal of affiliation rapidly developed to a vast extending system of bans and proscriptions, affecting all trade unionists and members of the Labour Party, to bar the road against the victory of working class politics in the Labour Party.

Wrecking the Labour Party from Within

In this way the anti-communist drive of the right-wing leadership to maintain their domination became, no longer simply the question of denial of rights of affiliation of a still very small political grouping, but a denial of the rights of the unions and therefore a blow at the very basis of the Labour Party. Major unions, whose members had shown their confidence in the tried records and capacities of communist members by electing them as General Secretaries,

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found themselves deprived of the right to send their democratically elected General Secretaries to the political conferences of their common movement, so that the General Secretary would have to attend the Conference from outside to advise the delegation. Trade unions are denied the democratic right of free choice of their delegates to the conferences of the political movement which they are in fact supporting and financing. Delegates from unions are required to be individual members of the Labour Party. But individual members are required to pledge themselves to the anti-communist shibboleth, to swear that they are not communists or members of a proscribed organisation (united front organisations including communists).* Since over nine-tenths of the affiliated trade union members of the Labour Party are not also individual members, it follows that the nine-tenths majority are second class citizens, paying their levy, but in practical effect denied rights of participation.

The Fight for Working Class Democracy

This system of denial of democratic rights, in the name of anti-communism, became extended from the Labour Party also into the inner working of many important trade unions, in order to maintain right-wing leadership, as by Bevin and Deakin in relation to the giant Transport Workers' union. Here, however, working class democracy has won the day, to end the bans, with manifest progressive results; and the majority of unions today are free from such bans, thus revealing their more progressive character. But the system is still fully maintained in the Labour Party, in order to shackle the left and hinder its victory, and thereby continues to deny the democratic rights of free choice of delegates to represent their views to the five and a half million trade unionists affiliated to the Labour Party. Thus the question involved is no narrow question of a special section of opinion or grouping being victimised; but becomes a system of sabotage and wrecking the structure of democracy in the entire labour movement. For this reason the removal of the

* The panic fears entertained by the Labour Party top leadership of communists in their ranks or 'Reds under the bed' was illustrated by the incident that on the eve of the 1964 election an inner circle of the top leadership approached MI5 and the Secret Service for information on 'crypto-communists' among Labour MPs, and that in reply MI5 and the Secret Service informed them that there were no 'crypto-communists' in the Parliamentary Labour Party (reported by Chapman Pincher in the *Daily Express* of June 28, 1968, presumably from his customary inside police sources). The same happened when Herbert Morrison became Home Secretary, and immediately demanded from his permanent official the full facts on Russian gold financing the Communist Party, so that he could publish it to the world, and received the chilling reply that the most exhaustive inquiries had already been made and revealed no evidence to substantiate the allegation.

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bans and proscriptions which artificially divide and hinder co-operation of adherents of the working class movement and supporters of socialism needs to be a primary item of any united left programme, in order that the left shall be able to conquer.

Why Labour Governments Have Failed

This contradiction between the denial of class politics by the upper leadership and the actual class basis of the organisation of the Labour Party is the canker at the root which has continually vitiated the efforts of seven decades, compelled permanent inner conflict, and turned the role of successive Labour Governments, despite all the attempts at liberal reforms within the system, in the final analysis into weapons of capitalism against the working class. The record of every Labour Government in turn has demonstrated this truth. Always the class contradiction and conflict with the working class has brought the downfall. The first Labour Government of MacDonald fell after the united opposition of the working class had compelled the withdrawal of the prosecution of a communist editor; and MacDonald then proceeded to lose the election for Labour by permitting the Foreign Office, of which he was nominal head, to broadcast a flagrant anti-Soviet forgery as the sensation of the election. The second Labour Government of MacDonald fell when the Cabinet majority for imposing a ten per cent cut on the unemployed met with such united resistance from the trade union and labour movement, including a minority of Cabinet Ministers closer to the unions, that MacDonald resigned and joined openly with the Tories. The Attlee Labour Government first destroyed the magnificent 1945 majority, and then transformed it into a Tory majority a year later, when the disastrous cold war, rearmament, austerity and wage-freeze policies of Attlee, Bevin and Cripps had brought the Government into direct conflict with the working class, revealed to all when the TUC by 1950 carried a direct condemnation of the wage-freeze policy of the Labour Government. Thirteen years of Tory rule followed. And now the Wilson Labour Government has entered on the same deadly course.

Warning Lesson of 1931

There is plenty of talk today in the most varied quarters of the lesson of 1931. But the real lesson has still to be learned. Official Labour mythology has never attempted to offer any analysis, self-criticism or explanation of the episode save the simple assertion that MacDonald, Snowden and Thomas at the head of the Labour

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Party proved to be 'traitors'—without even mentioning that the Communist Party gave correct warning of this long before, at a time when official Labour was lauding this trio as idols. Even this mockery of self-criticism has today been abandoned, as too near the knuckle in relation to current events, when Wilson, Heath and Douglas-Home combined on March 12, 1968, to conduct a commemoration ceremony in honour of MacDonald and unveil a commemorative stone to him in Westminster Abbey next door to that of Bevin. Not without reason. For the Cabinet records now opened reveal how closely similar was the language of MacDonald and Snowden then, counterposing the interests of the 'nation' to the 'class', to that of Wilson and Barbara Castle today. Here is the entry for August 23, 1931, the last day of the MacDonald Labour Government:

> The Prime Minister warned the Cabinet . . . It must be admitted that the proposals as a whole represented the negation of everything that the Labour Party stood for, and yet he was absolutely certain that it was in the national interest to implement them if the country was to be secured.

And Snowden on the preceding day:

> The Chancellor informed the Cabinet of the nature of the consequences which would follow from a departure from the gold standard. He had no doubt whatever if he was compelled to choose between retaining the Labour movement in its present form and reducing the standard of living of the workmen by 50 per cent, which would be the effect of departing from the gold standard, where his duty would lie.

This conception of their 'duty' took them into the Tory camp, in whose company they then proceeded to depart from the gold standard without the supposedly inevitable 50 per cent cut in wages which they had previously held up as a scare in order to put through the real cuts they intended. So today once again Harold Wilson and Barbara Castle counterpose the supposed interests of the 'nation' to the interests of the 'class', as represented by the trade unions, without recognising that the presentation of the 'nation' as a community of interests between capital and labour is only a pseudonym for capitalism, while the organised working class in its fight against monopoly capitalism is the true representative of the overwhelming majority of the nation, that is, of all those who are exploited by the big monopolists.

Wilson Government's Suicidal Path

Harold Wilson, Roy Jenkins and Barbara Castle are not subjectively wicked, nor abnormally incompetent, and they entertain

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no doubt the most beautiful theoretical socialist ideals. They would have liked nothing better than to be able to fulfil their election programme, send production soaring by the miracles of modern technology, and out of that increased production shower benefits and rising standards on the people without need for any increase in taxation, and with lower interest and mortgage rates. This was not meant by them as election flapdoodle; they really believed they could do it. They really believed that they could run capitalism more efficiently than the capitalists, and in the interests of the people; for they knew nothing about the laws of capitalism, having been stuffed in their heads at their universities with the charlatan make-believe fictions of the academic apologists of capitalism, and having never succeeded in reading Marx's *Capital* beyond page 2. So when they came into office, the real laws of capitalism gave them a nasty shock and turned all their expectations upside down. For a time they got away with it by explaining that all the troubles were due to 'thirteen years of Tory misrule'; but as their own years of chronic crisis rolled on, that record began to become worn out. Assiduously they applied every prescription of their financial experts, to administer dose after dose of nasty medicine, soaring increases in taxation, an incomes policy to hold down wages, squeezing of credit, rising interest rates, and the accompanying increase of unemployment. Profits and share values boomed to record heights; but the economy remained sick; and the only remedy they could think of was to announce every few months that the outcome of the measures they had adopted had failed to fulfil what they had predicted, and that in consequence the only course would be to administer stronger doses of the same prescriptions which had produced such deadly results.

Beyond 1931

When Cripps announced devaluation in 1949 he said in his broadcast: 'This is a thing we can't do twice with any success'. But the Wilson Government, after imposing endless sacrifices with the professed aim of 'saving the pound', made the third devaluation of the pound in November, 1967; and today there is widespread talk of the prospect of a fourth. By 1968, after all the burdens imposed to correct the balance, the visible trade deficit, including the purchase of US military planes, reached £796 million, or the highest on record; overseas private capital investment reached £621 million; and overseas military expenditure £271 million; while a grandiose £2,000 million project was announced to build an Anglo-German

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combat plane. The US rediscount rate (equivalent to bank rate) has been raised to 6 per cent, the highest for forty years, the last time being in 1929 just before the Wall Street crash. The present forms of the developing economic and financial crisis of world capitalism differ from 1931; but the sharpness of the dangers is evident. Furious at this bankruptcy of all their plans Mr. Wilson and his Ministers turn to denounce the workers for their high wage increases and excessive consumption as the cause of the trouble. When they speak of excess consumption to be curbed by draconian taxation, they never refer to such items as a £10,000 debutante's ball spent in a night by a rich monopolist, who is of course notoriously known by all diligent readers of the popular press, Ministers' speeches and the Inland Revenue returns to have been already taxed out of existence and to be living on the breadline, as he commutes between his mansion in Kensington, his country house in Berkshire and his villa in the Bahamas. No: the anger of the accusing finger of Cabinet Ministers is pointed at the extravagant expenditure of weekly wage earners' households, battling against ever rising prices, mortgage payment increases, rent increases and redundancy. When the workers fight back with their organisation, and even win victories by industrial action and their strength of organisation, as at Fords, the attack is turned to conduct a direct offensive against the organisations of the working class, against the trade unions. This goes beyond 1931. Even MacDonald never attempted this in 1931. For the first time in a hundred years the offensive is launched to bring penal law into operation against hitherto normal and legal activities of trade unions and strikers in peacetime. And this offensive is launched by a Labour Government with Tory backing. This is the battle which has now opened.

Hour For Action

There is no time to be lost in this critical battle. Fearful of the overwhelming opposition already aroused, Ministers are reported to be considering a plan to attempt to rush through the legislation before the assizes of the labour movement can have time to meet. They try to demobilise opposition by threatening that a Tory Government would carry through even worse legislation. On the contrary. If a Labour Government were to carry through this legislation, the resultant body-blow to the labour movement would ensure the return of a Tory Government, which would then have the greatest pleasure in using and reinforcing this anti-union legislation with the added advantage of a Labour label. We cannot afford a

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new 1931. We cannot assume that history will permit our labour movement an infinite series of 1931. When Mr. Short in his address to the National Union of Teachers spoke of the menace of a 'massive thrust of reaction' in all fields now manifesting itself, he was using a very obvious strategy to attempt to divert the justified dissatisfaction of the teachers over the attitude of Mr. Short and his fellow Ministers to their demands. But the menace of which he spoke is real, and is the direct consequence of the policies pursued by Mr. Short and his fellow Ministers. Weimar Social Democracy prepared the way for fascism. The unity of the left was not achieved in time to prevent Hitler coming to power. Conditions are not the same here. But if in the present critical battle the left, equally the political left and the unions, were to fail to unite and act in time to defeat this offensive, mass disillusionment with Labour reformism could give rise to ugly consequences. Only unity of the left, parliamentary and trade union, socialists, communists and trade unionists, with the unions as the decisive mobilised strength of the working class, rallying, as such unity can, the majority of the population, can save the future of the labour movement and democracy in Britain. Whoever opposes such unity of the left, whether for reasons of right-wing dogmatism or left-wing purism, plays into the hands of reaction. The warning is sounding in our ears.

R.P.D.

LABOUR MONTHLY FORTY YEARS AGO

Trade Unions and Labour

Mr. J. R. MacDonald in a recent tour of a Seaham constituency spoke in every part of it—except Dawdon, where 3,800 men and boys had then been fighting a life-and-death struggle for bread for three weeks—and when at Murton, a twenty minutes 'bus ride from Dawdon, he was asked 'Why was not Mr. MacDonald giving a fighting lead to the miners at Dawdon Pit', he answered:

> He knew his job better than to interfere in what was Trade Union business. The Labour Party, unlike the Communists, was not out to exploit the industrial difficulties of the Unions.

Fighting for bread and helping to win that fight is the main task in the present period. The Communists will never desert that fight or the workers who are engaged in it.

(From 'The General Election and the Class Struggle', by Harry Pollitt, *Labour Monthly*, May, 1929.)

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TRADE UNIONS: STRATEGY FOR UNITY

John Ball

IT is the Government's intention that work begin immediately drawing up its Industrial Relations Bill—the measure with which Labour's right wing hopes to strangle the growing militancy and initiative of the trade unions. This is the issue at the heart of today's industrial and political situation. The attack is on, against the very bodies which bore and have sustained the Labour Party for more than sixty years. The question not decided is how far growing pressure from the unions and the parliamentary left (increasingly the not-so-left as well) can smother the intended penal laws.

The battle against them grows visibly day by day. So much so that the Government has bowed to Tory pressures to produce its Bill immediately. They are in a hurry. As *The Times* warned, on March 24:

> If legislation is left until the end of the year it will synchronise with revision of the Government's incomes policy. And if the Government find it necessary to continue compulsory restrictions on pay increases, the two things together might produce an unmanageable political situation.

The real danger seen by *The Times*, however (whatever the situation on incomes policy), is that the tide of opposition might wash away the Government's legislative proposals altogether if they are allowed to lie around too long.

In order to provide a focus for the movement's opposition, and to lift the struggle to a higher, more organised level, transport workers and engineers (supported by others) proposed a special congress, well before the normal one due in September. The right-wing TUC leaders, however, fought against this move, unless the parliamentary time-table was speeded up significantly or a shorter penal Bill introduced as per the Tory demands.

Despite this attempt to damp down the force of trade union opposition to the Government's intentions, a new phenomenon is growing in the movement as the campaign develops—a phenomenon which can affect the whole course of events. One of the strongest, most united movements of recent times is evolving, aimed at ending present state interference in collective bargaining and stopping any further intrusion in union or union-employer affairs. It encompasses the workshops and workshop organisation, with the mass demonstration at the Conference of Executives on February 27 and the

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parliamentary lobby as the first major results. Now the drive is on—with decisions from many parts of the country—to stage a May Day strike of protest. From union branch to executive level the demand is being taken up, with pledges such as that from the engineers' executive to do all in their power to defeat the proposed laws. Thus it finds a reflection in the TUC General Council and also in the Labour Party's own apparatus. Significantly, it became a key issue of the Ford dispute, where the company was trying to jump Mrs. Castle's gun.

All the demands are underpinned by the overwhelming votes last autumn at the TUC and the Labour Party Conference to reject further state intrusion in industrial affairs. As the union conference season opens, it is clear that last year's general demand against interference will be spelled out in terms of the White Paper.

So widespread and united is this campaign of opposition that, in a powerful sense, we can say that the movement is actually holding its own congress—in a unique way, but with such force that it is affecting the political situation in Whitehall, in parliament and in the wider public field. This does not supplant the need for a special early congress—rather it strengthens the case for it and helps towards making it a reality. It also shows that if a block is put on the movement's use of its own machinery to express its views and organise through its national forum, then this cannot and will not be the end of the matter.

Nor is the battle confined to a defence of the unions' position or (as the right wing jeers) a sterile process of 'anti-everything'. As Sid Bidwell, MP, wrote in last month's issue, 'there is now optimism in resistance.' And much of the optimism rests on the fact that new union forces are developing, that the work of the left in the unions over recent years is beginning to give forth its fruits. Britain's two largest unions—the transport workers and engineers—are for the first time not merely pursuing similar policies, but policies which can change the face of trade union power and objectives. Forward-looking leaders have complained over recent years (answering the charge that the unions want to grab everything) that the trouble with the British unions has been too modest demands and insufficient force in carrying them through. Those days could now be numbered.

The Ford dispute (despite the difficulties early in the negotiations) stands as a signpost pointing the way towards closer unity both within unions and between them. The *Financial Times* (March 7, 1969) was quick to sense, early on in the dispute, what dangers it

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held for the employers. By going to court, it said, Fords had forfeited part of its bargaining power:

> On the union side there will understandably be a mood of elatement. More ominously, perhaps, the dispute has served to cement the new 'left wing' liaison between the country's two biggest unions.

It did more. What also happened to send warning shivers down the employers' spines was that the two unions responded to the views and wishes of their members on the spot. Ford workers knew what they wanted (and what they did not want) and had shown they were prepared to take action for it. Thus the fight for better pay and against Fords' attempt to hamstring the stewards, distort the joint machinery in its favour, and weaken the influence of the unions themselves, took on a new, decisive form. It was a taste for many union members at Fords of one aspect of industrial democracy—which is now the subject of very widespread debate in the unions. This involves the workers having a greater say and greater influence over all aspects of their industrial lives. And that, as a union leader remarked to me recently, involves less dictatorial power for governments, employers and any union leaders who believe that their organisations are their own personal property. The means towards this end is in general principle the same as the end itself: stronger unions in terms of leadership, structure, personnel, and cohesion between leaders and rank-and-file, leading to stronger unions in terms of policy and the power they can wield.

Had this element of industrial democracy been absent in the Ford dispute the result would have been defeat and frustration, with a flood of employers immediately jumping on the 'penal clause' bandwagon and the Government suggesting that the legal whip is the best method of dealing with the workers. As it is, the victories won by the Ford unions have given all new heart, encouraged other sections of the car industry, strengthened the tendency towards greater union democracy, and directly helped the fight against anti-union laws. It has shown the 'ball and chain' merchants in the Cabinet that, not only do workers find attacks on their legal rights repugnant, but that they are prepared to fight them. The Ford moguls of Detroit and Dagenham may have imagined that a combination of company ruthlessness and legal bludgeoning spelled victory for them but the unions and workers taught them otherwise.

And the lesson is valuable to all concerned. For the industrial militancy and opposition to legal threats and penal sanctions helped forward their twin battle in the political sphere. It was an example of what the left in both wings of the movement have long

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argued for—unity in purpose and aim, each helping the other by their different forms of action. The sixteen to five vote on the Labour Party executive against the White Paper is a reflection of the trade union opposition to it. The fact that Jim Callaghan, Labour Party treasurer-cum-Cabinet Minister, voted with the majority is a straw in the wind indicating both its direction and its speed. The defence of his position by party chairman Harry Nicholas adds further weight to the union position. Nothing is yet assured, except that united mass pressure is the sole hope. More will undoubtedly be needed to win the unions' demand. But joint political-industrial action is establishing itself as the force that could win this and other future battles.

THE MERSEY SOUND THAT WILSON DOESN'T LIKE

Tony McClelland
Executive Committee Member,
Liverpool Trades Council

MR. WILSON went down in history by giving the Beatles the BEM for services rendered by these lads to the arts and exports in the interests of the country. Most people know they come from the Merseyside and their special sound has reverberated round the world.

Mr. Wilson's approach to another sound from the Merseyside, the sound of trade unionism from a working class approach: he doesn't like it at all. His famous (or infamous) speech at Prescot, condemning the Ford workers of Halewood, threatening Merseyside with the withdrawal of the £58 million annual help as a development area, was in sharp contrast to his 'Beatle' approach.

Merseyside has fought over the years for new industries to be brought here: the mass lobbies of parliament in the fifties, one specifically from Merseyside, led to the establishment in this area of the motor car industry. At that time we had 30,000 unemployed —then we were designated as a developing area. Today we still have approximately 30,000 unemployed on the Merseyside according to recent reports of the Merseyside Development Council.

Why is this? In the main because of the decline in traditional industries: a much smaller labour force in the shipbuilding industry; the decline in ship-repair; the reduction in the railways; the 'golden

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handshake' to men of fifty and fifty-five (in many cases never to work again); reduction of crews on ships; the development of new forms of construction and building; the transfer of sea passenger services to other ports. All have added to maintaining the high level of unemployment in spite of the motor car industry and its subsidiaries.

Over the recent period a deepening of this problem has emerged with the sackings at the English Electric because of mergers with the (Weinstock) General Electric Company (another 2,000 jobs threatened). It is also being rumoured that Cammel Lairds, the only shipbuilding firm on the Mersey, will be laying off another 3,000 in the next year or so. Already numerous firms in ship-repair have closed or merged at an accelerated rate over the last two years. Men of 20 and 25 years service just thrown on the scrap heap. So much for the Geddes Plan and its supporters.

But one of the most serious and dangerous practices that is also helping to deepen the problem of unemployment on the Merseyside is the pernicious infiltration into the area, by some full-time trade union officials, of productivity deals tied to conditions of every description, usually for a couple of pounds increase (which the employers gladly concede). All sorts of clauses are implemented: interchangeability of labour, mobility of labour, redundancies of one description or another, either through natural wastage or redundancy payments.

How can negotiators fall for this part of the Prices and Incomes Board proposals: to accept increases based primarily on productivity in a contracting economy must lead inevitably to increases in unemployment. Surely one of the first points of elementary economics is to understand the constant drive for increased profit, based on the reduction of labour power and the speed-up of the reduced productive force by offering an extra pound or two of wages saved from sackings.

It is against this background that one must view what is happening on the Merseyside today, because obviously the working class, both manual and non-manual, are not taking it lying down, as recent events have shown.

Many people, especially right-wing trade unionists and politicians (and unfortunately some tired friends who cannot keep up with the fast developing movement), try to give the impression that there is a wildness about Merseyside, an irresponsibility, a wildcat atmosphere that is not the order of things in any other part of the country and never can be.

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We on the Merseyside dispute this approach. The leadership on the Merseyside is a dedicated and responsible leadership, which bases its approach on the understanding that the trade union movement must be reformed—not in the interest of the state, to help the employers to greater profits, but in the interest of the working class, by hand and brain, to develop the existing trade unions into fighting machines to help throw back the offensive of monopoly capitalism, to wrest out of their hands the good things of life. The Mersey sound of the trade union movement is the twentieth century approach. To fight back not only on the narrow economic issues, but also on the important issues of policy change within the labour movement. We feel that what is developing here will percolate throughout the country in the near future. That is why every shady device, every threat, every instruction not to do this or that, even to bringing in the Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, shows an awareness by the right-wing and monopoly capitalism of the danger emanating from the Merseyside.

What is this danger? Mass participation by the industrial working class, industrial action on a political issue.

Since 1965, mass meetings have been held on the Merseyside. The first was organised by the draughtsmen's organisation, with main speakers Brother Clive Jenkins, then General Secretary of ASSET, Brother Eric Heffer, MP for Walton, and addressed by our own beloved Leo McGree. From that meeting a committee was born: the Merseyside Defence Committee of Trade Unions. This committee was unique in the sense that it is not a rank-and-file committee alone but is composed of lay officials and full-time officials. It organised meetings of explanation to counteract the 'don't rock the boat' theory. Speakers like Clive Jenkins, Eric Heffer, MP, Albert Booth, MP, Jack Dash, Brother Cooley of the draughtsmen's executive, Jimmy Jarvie, joint General Secretary of the boilermakers —all made valuable contributions to explain the implications of this Government's prices and incomes policy.

Since then a powerful movement has developed. The seamen challenged the employers and achieved shop stewards' organisation at sea. The dockers developed the £17 minimum movement round the Merseyside; a shop stewards' movement was also developed in their industry. The tugmen got their £17; the lorrymen went on strike for £17 minimum. Some achieved it, others didn't—but all achieved improvements. Then the famous thirteen weeks' strike of the Liverpool busmen, culminating last year in a May Day demonstration of all workers, called by the Liverpool Trades Council and

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Labour Party and the Merseyside Committee for Defence of Trade Unions, in support of the bus workers and against the prices and incomes policy of this Government: a very good response was recorded.

Since then we have had the strike of the north-west construction workers against the imposition of a productivity agreement, which they won; a strike by the building workers for the £17 11s. 8d. and £15 minimum (unfortunately sold out for a measly twopence ha'penny per hour).

All this movement from small beginnings has led to the upsurge of the shop stewards' movement on the Merseyside right down at the shop, site, shipyard and office floor level. Movements both constitutional and extra-constitutional have emerged, each sympathetic to the other—*this is what is new.*

Now the Merseyside trades councils are taking up the struggle. The February 27 movement saw 50,000 workers on a one-day stoppage on the Merseyside against the White Paper, *In Place of Strife*: whole factories out, Standard Triumph all out, Fords out on the penal clauses, English Electric out on redundancies from mergers. Building workers, construction workers, the whole port stopped by the dockers. (What strength was added to Hugh Scanlon and Jack Jones by the Halewood Ford workers' stand—all vetted, incidentally, before they can get a start at the factory.)

The trades councils issued 120,000 leaflets; between 7,000 and 8,000 demonstrated with banners flying. This was Liverpool and the Merseyside on Thursday, February 27, 1969.

With the split of the Liverpool Trades Council and Labour Party into two separate bodies (thus ending the ban on communists) some people forecast a weakening of the borough Labour Party, but the resolution from the Liverpool Trades Council calling for a stoppage on May Day 1969 and a demonstration as a further stage in the struggle against the White Paper was also adopted by the borough Labour Party, representing nine constituencies, in spite of Merseyside right-wing MPs and the anti-working class paper, the *Liverpool Daily Post.*

May Day—international workers' day. The day of international solidarity of all the working labouring masses will be celebrated in our traditional style. But this time we on Merseyside are on the offensive. Our message is: traditional trade unionism *alone* is out. Combine mass action of movement, both constitutional and extra-constitutional. Reform the trade union movement in our interest, not in the interest of the state, monopoly capitalism or the right-wing social democrat lackeys.

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DUNDEE MOVES

John F. Copland
Secretary, Dundee Trades Council

BEING recognised and accepted not only as the second industrial city in Scotland, Dundee is also probably one of the most highly organised trade union-wise.

There is a long tradition of trade union and political struggle in the city which is unique in that although the city has grown larger it retains the old fashioned view of a blow at one is a blow at us all, the united we stand divided we fall attitude. This manifests itself in many ways. One of them is that all the full time trade union officials meet regularly together to discuss any matter pertaining to their work and functions as officials—a minature trades council, so to speak. They took the decision to go and see our two local MPs the Rt. Hon. George M. Thomson MP and Peter Doig MP in January to protest most vehemently at the White Paper *In Place of Strife*. It is reported that the two MPs were obviously severely shaken as some of the officials represented unions which have never been noted for their militancy or criticism of a Labour Government. However the fact remained that unanimously they condemned the White Paper and warned the MPs that they would not support it in any way.

Following this the Building Trades Federation met and decided to reject the White Paper in its entirety and also decided to support the Scottish miners in their call for a one day stoppage on February 27. Collections were taken on building sites throughout the city and delegates elected to lobby the TUC executives conference at Croydon. The city at this time was in a turmoil. A proposal to transfer to private hands the municipal bus service brought calls for strike action in support of the busmen. The building trade workers (always very close to the busmen) immediately stopped in support, and in a joint demonstration on the city square stormed the City Chambers because the Lord Provost (Mayor) refused to hear a deputation. It was described locally and nationally, on press, radio and television, as a riot.

Against this background, the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions called a mass meeting of shop stewards, with the Building Trades Federation, busmen, Jute and Flax Workers Union (a local union) and Trades Council officials also invited to discuss the local bus situation and the White Paper. This meeting

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decided several things: 1. They unanimously condemned the White Paper in its entirety; 2. A mass stoppage to take place on Thursday 27 in support of the Scottish miners' call; 3. That as many delegates as possible be sent to Croydon.

The Jute and Flax Workers' General Secretary and Assistant General Secretary stated that this union was entirely opposed to the White Paper and would probably stop their members on Wednesday 26 as well, as they themselves would be in Croydon on the Thursday as members of the TUC. This they did.

Along with the jute workers (some 16,000), 3,000 girls from the Timex Watch factory also stopped work and marched to the city square. There at the mass meeting again it was unanimously agreed to oppose both the sale of the buses and the White Paper. It really was an impressive sight to see the square packed from side to side with thousands of girls from the jute and Timex factories. Both industries are predominantly staffed by women. It was also significant that the more militant the speech the louder the cheers.

On Thursday 27 again thousands stopped work and marched to the city square. The National Cash Register factories, the shipyards, the building trade workers and many others were involved as had been agreed at the joint shop stewards meeting. Dundee therefore had two days of direct political strike action, a point not missed by the Thomson press.

At Croydon delegates from the builders, busmen, shipyards, railways, engineers and Trades Council representing over thirtyfive and a half thousand trade unionists in the city lobbied the TUC. They also went to Westminster and lobbied Peter Doig MP. The MP stated that in view of the tremendous feeling in the city and the pressure being brought upon him he would have to vote against the White Paper. To his credit he did. He was one of the 50. For reasons best known to himself the other MP never appeared.

Again calls for a stoppage in the city are being made. This time for May Day. The Trades Council has asked the City Labour Party to organise a joint demonstration against the White Paper for May Day on the city square. Many meetings have been held and further meetings planned to explain and discuss the White Paper. The Trades Council and City Labour Party are both holding special meetings on it. Individual branches are pouring resolutions to local and national organisations protesting against it. Having exploded the movement into mass action such as has seldom been seen on a single political issue for many, many years one would think the Government would realise its mistake and draw back. Unfortunately

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the class legislation on which this White Paper is based, is a reflection of the mental attitude of people who have never known what a trade union branch is and never will. It is the duty of all of us who do, to fight, fight and fight again to ensure that the White Paper and the people who support it are defeated and that the anti-working class policies which they have released in abundance are rescinded and replaced by comrades and policies which the movement has voted and paid for.

AN 'INSULTING' SUGGESTION

'After such a tragedy as that of the Longhope lifeboat the first question is whether anything can be done to prevent another disaster . . . We learn that of the Royal Lifeboat Institution's 156 lifeboats only thirty are self-righting . . and that the Institution had a substantial deficit in 1967 and another, though smaller, one last year.

'If only, it might be argued, the Institution had much more money then they could build more really modern boats . . . It would be both absurd and insulting to thrust public money against their will on people who are running a voluntary service so admirably.'

(From a leading article in *The Times*, March 20, 1969.)

ENGLISH ACTRESS IN BERLIN

Amelia Bayntun*

RECENTLY I visited Berlin as a guest of the Ministry of Culture of the GDR, having been invited to visit several theatres there.

Lunching at the Opera Cafe on my first day, I met Mrs. John Heartfield, widow of the famous creator of photomontage. Heartfield died on April 26, 1968, but later at their flat I felt all around me the vigour and understanding of this great person. Mrs. Heartfield is an exceptional woman who devotes a great deal of her time in organising and arranging exhibitions of her husband's work in many countries. She showed me examples of his designs in some unusual kitchen furnishings of wall containers and shelves.

My first visit was to the Berliner Ensemble, situated, naturally enough, in Bertolt Brecht Platz. Here one can see the most vigorous and compelling theatre in the world. Brecht's widow, Helene Weigel, is the Director of this robust and talented company. 'Man is Man'

* Amelia Bayntun's best known role is that of Mrs. Blitzstein in 'Blitz'.

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was the first play on my list but on arrival I found that due to illness 'The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui' was being substituted. This situation is not unusual. Leading artists are never replaced by understudies at any theatre. It is felt that audiences must be given the highest standard of performance possible and unless an artist of equal merit is available the production or concert is replaced by one of similar standard from its repertoire. Contrary to my expectations, the house was full and the performances fresh and vital. In the foyer was an exhibition of posters of Brecht productions from many different countries including several from England.

Actors can look forward to playing a different part each night, for most theatres have the repertoire system. Four or five performances a week is average but where parts for women are few it can be as little as two. However, there are rehearsals to attend and readings of new plays so the actor is kept very interested. Contracts are for two years and television and film work can be fitted in. Students are drawn from amateur companies all over the country. They are attached to theatres for training and can progress right to the top. This is a first-class system which gives the amateur theatre a special place in the arts and a true opportunity for young talent.

In the early part of this century the Deutsches Theater was the home of productions by the famous Max Reinhardt. Here I saw a memorable performance by Fred Düren as Oedipus. What a fine voice this actor has. In this production, every detail of the set and costumes had been carried out with great care. The masks were a work of art. In the repertoire here is the magnificent production of 'The Dragon' which I saw on a previous visit two years ago.

There is no star system in the GDR and actors are not star conscious. There is no vulgar front-of-house advertising but large stills of the productions are arranged in the foyer. No advertisements in programmes either, but full of interesting reading, photographs and drawings, with casts and credits in a separate folder. Facilities for the public are very good. At the large well-staffed cloakrooms everyone without exception removes hats and coats and changes boots, enabling them to watch the performance unhampered. Going to the theatre in Berlin is an occasion for everyone which I found most refreshing.

All theatres open on Sundays and the Maxim Gorky was presenting 'Liola' by Pirandello, a comedy about Italian peasants' productivity. German perhaps is not a helpful language for the

(Continued on page 218)

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Ekkehard Schall as Arturo Ui (Hitler)
and Siegfried Weiss as the actor

Berliner Ensemble production of Brecht's

'The Resistable Rise of Arturo Ui'

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Sabine Krug as Carmina

Maxim Gorky Theatre production of Pirandello's

'Liola'

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portrayal of Italians but there were some enjoyable performances. Back stage in this very cosy theatre is the actors' restaurant and bar. Here I talked with the popular actress, Sabine Krug, who played Carmina. I thought the actors looked too clean in the play but she explained that there were several earthy plays in their repertoire and the public had grown rather tired of seeing them in their truly earthy state. They had therefore decided to convey this aspect through their acting and appear as clean as possible. This they did admirably. O'Casey's 'The Star Turns Red' is in their programme.

Shaw is a very popular author and his 'Caesar and Cleopatra' at the Volksbuhne proved to be an experience. Within moments of the rise of the curtain, the humour of his text was captured by artist and audience alike. The performances, sets and costumes were of the highest standard. An excellent production.

'The Tales of Hoffman' at the newly altered Comic Opera was another splendid evening. Melitta Muszely was marvellous in all four parts of Stella, Olympia, Antonia and Guilietta. Directed by the great Walter Felsenstein, the team-work was nothing short of magnificent. At the very end, the curtain rose on a group of all the backstage staff who earned thunderous applause, and rightly, too.

Outside was a fleet of buses, a special service for those living in the suburbs.

There is an ever growing repertoire of striking things in the theatre of East Berlin which is assuredly vital and widely popular. Every theatre I visited was playing to capacity and I noted too that for the actor both encouragement and security are natural phenomena.

US PRESIDENTIAL PERQUISITES

'While Johnson has all but abdicated the role of a creative Chief Executive during the past year, he has spent much of that time building his own fortune at home. It may well turn out that the Johnson financial empire in Texas is a more interesting chapter in history than the Johnson failures in Washington. He went into the Presidency with a fortune estimated $15 million; he will return to Texas with a fortune estimated at $20 million—a healthy increase for a man who, supposedly, put his holdings in trust when he entered the White House.

'Actually, Johnson has made little effort to hide what he has been up to. And what he has been up to includes abusing his public powers. He now owns, or indirectly controls, part of every bank in Austin. He also controls banks in Johnson City and in several nearby hamlets, and lately he has bought into at least one Houston bank. Some of the small banks—and all of the large ones—have profited substantially under the Johnson Administration by the use of federal moneys.' (From 'Looking Back on Johnson' by R. G. Sherrill, *New York Nation*, January 1, 1969.)

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Lenin on Wireless

To Comrade Stalin with the request to pass this round to all members of the Political Bureau.

Comrade Stalin,

Appended are two reports. The first from Professor Osadchy, an expert on electricity, about radio-telegraph and telephone communication; the second is from Bonch-Bruyevich . . . a prominent specialist and inventor in radio engineering and one of the principal figures at the Nizhni-Novgorod Radio Laboratory.

These reports show that it is technically quite feasible to broadcast human speech over any distance by wireless; furthermore, it is also possible to use many hundreds of stations that could broadcast speeches, reports and lectures delivered in Moscow to many hundreds of places throughout the Republic, situated hundreds, and, under certain circumstances, thousands of versts away from Moscow.

I think that from the standpoint of propaganda and agitation, especially for those masses of the population who are illiterate, and also for broadcasting lectures, it is absolutely necessary for us to carry out this plan. Considering the unfitness of most of the bourgeois professors of social sciences whom we are using and even the harm caused by them, we have no other way out than to enable our few communist professors, who are capable of delivering lectures on social sciences, to deliver these lectures for hundreds of localities in all parts of the Federation.

I am, therefore, of the opinion that under no circumstances should we stint funds to complete the organisation of wireless communication and produce efficiently working loudspeakers.

I propose that we pass a decision to allocate, as an extraordinary measure, a sum of up to 100,000 gold roubles from the gold fund over and above the estimate to organise the work at the Nizhni-Novgorod Radio Laboratory in order to accelerate to the maximum the completion of the work it has begun to install efficient loudspeakers and many hundreds of stations throughout the Republic, which can repeat for the broad masses the speeches, reports and lectures delivered in Moscow or some other centre.

Lenin, letter to Stalin, May 19, 1922. (*Collected Works*, English edition, Vol. 33, pp. 360-1.)

NOTE. The first BBC radio programme was broadcast on November 14, 1922.

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"I'M NOT A BIT JEALOUS OF ALF ROBEN'S PAY RISE, I SUPPOSE HE DESERVES IT, AFTER ALL WE ONLY HAVE TO CONTEND WITH WATER, DANGER TO LIFE AND LIMB, SILICOSIS, AND OTHER MINOR HAZARDS, SO I SUPPOSE WE DONT QUALIFY FOR PAY AWARDS!"

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Alex H. Kitson
General Secretary

The National Union of Mineworkers

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extends greetings to all Trade Unionists in Great Britain and throughout the world and wishes them peace and prosperity.

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CONSTRUCTIONAL ENGINEERING UNION

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J. HAMILTON, President
E. MARSDEN, General Secretary

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The Executive Committee greets all members and fellow trade unionists on this day, which annually affirms the resolution of all to work in unity for common aims.

R. W. BUCK
GENERAL SECRETARY

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CLYDESIDE IN ACTION

Sam Barr
Convener, Scotstoun Division,
Upper Clyde Shipbuilders Ltd.

THE actions of Clydeside workers on February 27 were the product of growing frustration and bitterness at the continuing betrayals of the Labour Government and a growing realisation that action of a new kind is needed.

The past ten years have been difficult ones for the workers on Clydeside. They have faced closure after closure of factories and shipyards, resulting in unemployment and loss of job opportunities.

Many splendid campaigns and actions have been organised by the shop stewards and trade unions against closures. Only a week prior to the February 27 stoppage, the entire town of Clydebank had stopped work and 15,000 workers demonstrated against the proposed closure of Babcocks and Foster-Wheelers. It must be said, however, that these have not yet reached the size and scope and character necessary to prevent the closures, which must remain the aim.

When the Labour Government was returned in 1964, and more so when it was returned in 1966 with an overwhelming majority, to end thirteen years of Tory rule, there was a feeling of excitement amongst many Clydeside workers, and a new sense of security.

What has happened to that feeling of three years ago? Since their election the Labour Government has carried out policies which are foreign to socialism and to the wishes of the workers who elected them, policies of rationalisation, mergers, unemployment and wage freezing; policies which have put in the balance the traditional loyalties of the Clydeside to Labour, as was seen in the 1968 local elections when Labour lost control of the city of Glasgow for the first time in thirty years; thirteen Scottish National Party candidates were elected almost exclusively from solid working class wards.

The last straw came when Barbara Castle introduced her White Paper, *In Place of Strife*. It seemed as though all hell had been let loose in the factories and shipyards.

Meetings were held throughout industry in Glasgow and the west of Scotland, in factories, shipyards, building sites, offices, garages, railway depots and workshops, and decisions taken for strikes, demonstrations and the lobby. Throughout the city there was anger and a determination to take action to warn the Government to drop the draconic measures they were proposing to take against the trade

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union movement.

The Joint Committee for the Defence of the Trade Unions, comprising official representatives of the trade unions, was recalled. They issued a declaration of total opposition to any form of anti-union legislation being introduced and called for full support for the lobby of executives at Croydon on February 27, one of the finest political campaigns conducted on Clydeside.

The reaction of the workers to the call for the lobby was almost unanimous support, but also a feeling that this was not enough. Something more drastic was needed to show the Government that the workers were in earnest and that they were sick, fed-up and had had enough. The workers also wanted to show the Trades Union Congress and the executives that they were looking for militant leadership on this issue and that if the leaders were willing to lead, the workers were ready to fight.

A small group of conveners from shipyards and factories met to discuss the situation and how to collate the decisions that were being taken. The conveners agreed that there should be convened a meeting of the Clydeside Action Committee, which is an unoffical committee of shop stewards from the area. This meeting was attended by 240 shop stewards representing 50,000 workers in the west of Scotland. The propositions put to this meeting were for full support for the lobby on February 27 at Croydon and parliament, and for strike actions in support of it. This was carried unanimously and the shop stewards then put it to the workers in their various factories and shipyards. The result was that on the evening of February 26 a special train left Glasgow and travelled via Edinburgh to London carrying 240 delegates including 100 miners to lobby the executives at Croydon and MPs at the House of Commons. 32,000 workers stopped work on Clydeside and every shipyard on the upper reaches was paralysed with the entire 15,000 labour force out on strike.

The workers knew that this was no ordinary strike they were involved in. They were striking for a political aim, to defeat the proposed government legislation, and even though Upper Clyde Shipbuilders have since withdrawn the two year guarantee of employment from the 15,000 who went on strike the reaction of the workers is that no employer or Government will deprive them of their right to strike, no matter what 'guarantees' they withdraw.

The campaign here in April has been focused on the Scottish Trades Union Congress meeting at Rothesay. The Joint Committee launched a petition which was circulated in the factories with the aim of collecting thousands of signatures and electing delegates

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to take the petitions to Rothesay on the day the debate on the White Paper took place, Thursday April 17, to ask the STUC completely to reject the Government's proposals.

Following the lobby of the STUC there is due to be a recall meeting of the Clydeside Action Committee to discuss further steps to defeat the anti-trade union legislation, when it is clear that the May 1 strike will be one of the issues for discussion.

BORDER CLASHES AND SOCIALISM

Quæstor

'WE have been betting on this for a long time,' was the cynical remark of a strategy expert one evening in April, when a BBC interviewer asked him about the international significance of the Chinese border attack on Soviet frontier troops.

And the pundit was not alone. Take one prominent example. Herr F. J. Strauss, former Defence Minister of West Germany—now Finance Minister but still one of the most influential men in his Government and in the counsels of Nato—had just published a book, *Challenge and Answer*, about world affairs from the anti-Soviet point of view. In the chapter entitled 'Yellow Peril?' (the question-mark has its special point), he explains that such conflicts 'bring Europe not harm but benefit'—meaning by 'Europe' the Nato countries, of course—because it is interested in keeping the USSR 'tightly bound' on its Asian borders: and China is similarly interested in a strong power existing on the Soviet western frontier. Thus the interests of 'Europe' and China 'temporarily and partially coincided.' Moreover, says Strauss, when Europe (the Europe which he has in mind, the one in which the Bundeswehr today is by far the strongest armed force) is sufficiently strong, it too—'because of this Soviet-Chinese conflict'—will have opportunities for launching its 'political offensive'*: while, 'when the hour strikes', Mao will

* West German propagandists have never made much of a secret of what such an offensive would mean: some 'incident' on the borders of the German Democratic Republic, which they don't recognise as borders, on which their armed forces would have the pretext for invading the GDR—or, as they say, reuniting the whole of Germany. Ivor Montagu, in his book, *Germany's New Nazis*, describes much the same plans of Strauss's associates (pp. 92, 103-4). It is all the more strange, therefore, to find some opponents of the nuclear arms race selecting, as an example of possible present perils, not these openly chauvinist aspirations, but the fantastic hypothesis of the *German Democratic Republic's* authorities losing their heads and launching an attack on West Berlin—with Soviet support!

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certainly put in a claim for Vladivostok, the Soviet Far East and parts of Central Asia.

No one who followed the avalanche of hopeful speculations by diplomatic correspondents and 'situation analyses' by military commentators which fell upon the heads of readers of the British, American and French press, directly the attack on Damansky Island took place, could have any doubt that Herr Strauss's ideas, although nowhere else expressed with quite such brutal frankness, have been well to the fore in the thinking of the foreign ministries and war departments with whose spokesmen the correspondents concerned habitually discuss such matters.

The nearest we have had in Britain to the Strauss thesis, up to the time of writing, has been in the *Economist*. On March 8 it advised the Americans not to hurry the rapprochement with the USSR on which people in many countries are pinning their hopes of reduced tension. They should 'explore the greater flexibility that might emerge from a balance maintained, not on a see-saw but on a triangle': 'better relations with China might encourage the Russians to negotiate seriously.' In other words, tacitly encourage the Chinese to go on attacking, and take advantage of it. These, of course, were the tactics used so cleverly by Neville Chamberlain in seeming to 'negotiate seriously' with the Soviet Union in 1939, while Hitler went on with his aggressions—so cleverly that they landed us in the second world war. Again, on March 22 the *Economist* turned to Mao, explaining to him—just as its Tory predecessors did in 1939—that, if he wants 'quick results' in expansion, 'the southern door will remain effectively locked to him . . . there remains only one exit to the box: the one to the north.' And then (it went on, turning to President Nixon) it is the Americans who would gain most, because Mao's action on the Siberian border may 'lead to Russian concessions'—to the USA. It therefore advised the American President to 'play his hands well': the Soviet Union is in 'a diplomatic box,' while the USA now has 'some real room to manoeuvre,' the first time since the Vietnam war began.

The practical effect of the *Economist*'s argument is thus the same as that of Herr Strauss: you have a common interest with Mao in pressure on the Russians, don't for pity's sake respond to their proposals for nuclear disarmament and a European security conference and pact—and don't worry if the Chinese do hit first.

That is the silent assumption, too, behind the kindly warnings to the Chinese that in Moscow

> some Western diplomats believe that Russia is now preparing to retaliate . . . .

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> Nor can it be ruled out that some hawks in the Kremlin believe that the incident gives Russia a chance to strike at the Chinese nuclear installations in Sinkiang (*The Times* diplomatic correspondent, March 15).
>
> There must surely be a school of thought in Moscow arguing that it would be better to 'take out' China's nuclear weapons plants in Sinkiang now, rather than face the bigger threat later (*Telegraph* editorial, March 21).

How surprising that the Soviet Government instead proposed negotiations to the Chinese!

Old-fashioned socialists—'dogmatists', the capitalist press calls them nowadays—may naturally suppose that all these and similar arguments, interpretations and suppositions on the part of the enemies of socialism in all countries only demonstrate the more clearly to its supporters the supreme common interest of the working class everywhere, across and above all national frontiers, to stand united in frustrating the calculations of their common enemies. 'When I see the bourgeois press praising me, I ask myself: "You old fool, what have you been up to now?" '—August Bebel, veteran leader of the German workers up to 1913 (he was jailed in 1870 for denouncing his Government's war on the French Republic), is reputed to have said. Common sense dictates that the maxim applies no less today, when in a number of countries the working class has, in the words of the *Communist Manifesto* written by Marx and Engels, 'raised itself to the position of the ruling class'—and accordingly is faced on a world scale with the hostility of the most aggressive states of the imperialist bourgeoisie, in those countries where the working class has yet to come to power.

GUYANA—THE TRUTH

Cheddi Jagan

THE official returns for the December 16, 1968, general election gave the People's National Congress (PNC) 55.6 per cent, the People's Progressive Party (PPP) 36 per cent and the United Force (UF) seven per cent of the votes. The results of the 1964 election were PNC 40 per cent, PPP 46 per cent and UF 12 per cent. In the 53-member National Assembly, the number of seats now held by the PNC, PPP and UF are 30, 19 and four, respectively; in 1964, the corresponding numbers were 22, 24 and seven.

Anglo-American conspiracy, CIA-fomented and financed disturbances, and an imposed, changed electoral system, what the Rt. Hon. Harold Wilson, as Leader of the Opposition, had deemed

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a 'fiddled constitutional arrangement'* led to the ouster of the PPP Government and the installation of the PNC-UF coalition in December 1964. Massive fraud in the December 1968 election helped the PNC to form the Government alone. Through a rigged election, with fabricated, padded voters' lists, extensive voting by proxy and ballot box tampering, the PNC 'polled' 50.4 per cent of the votes cast in Guyana (a majority of one seat) and 55.6 per cent of the local and overseas votes (a working majority of seven).

For the first time in our electoral history, overseas Guyanese were allowed to vote. By manipulation, the PNC secured 94 per cent of the overseas votes. According to Granada TV 'World in Action' (January 6, 1969), only 4,700 of the 11,750 registered 'voters' in the United States, and 13,050 of the 44,300 registered in the United Kingdom, were genuine (19,000 voted in the UK alone). Making the unlikely assumption that all the 12,550 voters registered in the rest of the world were genuine and had voted, Granada said that the most generous estimate of Guyanese voters abroad should be 30,300, but 36,745 voted. 'Inescapably,' it said, 'at least 6,445 voters were faked, and that's being excessively cautious.' Mr. Humphrey Taylor, Director of Opinion Research Centre, which conducted an independent survey, said in the Granada programme:

> Obviously I don't know what happened in Guyana, but so far as Britain is concerned, the compilation of the register was a totally dishonest and corrupt operation. And, as we have clearly established, the great majority of the people listed, do not exist. This I would think is unprecedented for a Commonwealth country, as far as I know; and it is, you know, a pretty awful and disgraceful episode.

Inside Guyana, the voters list was also padded. At 299,348, the overall increase was 21 per cent in the four-year period, 1964-68, as compared with a 19 per cent increase in the 11-year period, 1953-64. Besides, there were uneven increases in different parts of the country. Increases were small in the PPP's areas of strength—nine per cent for one district, Mahaicony, and 10 per cent for the six districts of Corentyne, East Berbice—but large in the PNC's strongholds—109 per cent, 58 per cent and 49 per cent for Mackenzie, Mazaruni-Potaro and Abary districts, respectively.

In Guyana, an extraordinary number of proxies was issued to facilitate the casting of ballots for the PNC by dead, under-age and

* See Arthur Schlesinger's *A Thousand Days, John F. Kennedy in the White House*, pp. 668-669; *The Sunday Times* 'How the CIA got rid of Jagan' (February 16, 1967) and 'Macmillan, Sandys backed CIA's anti-Jagan Plot' (February 23, 1967).

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'phantom' voters. Large numbers of PPP supporters, on presenting themselves to vote, found that others had voted for them. This was the reason for the great secrecy shrouding the question of proxy votes. Many returning officers refused to make available to PPP agents and sub-agents the lists of proxies which by law should have been made available four days before polling day. Efforts to see them even after the elections failed. In 1964, the Commonwealth team of observers on the election had commented adversely on the proxy system of voting. It wrote that the 'one administrative provision which seemed open to manipulation was the proxy . . . we feel it is our duty to point out that the proxy system is liable to abuse.' Proxies increased from about 300 in 1961 to 6,635 in 1964 and to over 30,000 in 1968, equivalent to six seats.

There was also tampering with ballot boxes. In a ballot box for the Pomeroon District, four parcels of ballot papers bound with rubber bands were found! In several other boxes, the number of ballots did not tally with the number recorded at the end of polling.

The PNC regime clearly does not have a mandate to speak for the people of Guyana. Any plebiscite conducted under independent auspices with a thoroughly revised voters list will prove that the PNC Government has the support of only about a third of the electorate. As such it poses a grave danger to the peace and security of Guyana and its people. In the face of dwindling popular support, the PNC Government will rely more and more on the military. Guyana will increasingly take on the character of a police state of the Latin American type. In his 'throne speech' on February 14, 1969, the Governor-General announced that the Government proposed to enact legislation to enlarge the police and the army, to ban strikes and to restrict free movement. A week before, the Government, by an order, assumed powers to censor and ban films that are anti-imperialist in content. More specifically, such powers are aimed at the two Granada TV films, *The Trail of the Vanishing Voters* and *The Making of a Prime Minister*.

On February 24, the Government railroaded a bill through the National Assembly empowering it to prevent any person from leaving the country if the Minister of Home Affairs considers that 'it is necessary in the interests of defence, public safety or public order or for the purpose of preventing the subversion of democratic institutions in the country.'

Certain areas in Guyana will be declared 'protected areas' and no one will be allowed in these areas without permission. Previously, without this measure, the Government refused per-

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mission to a UPI (United Press International) correspondent and Peter d'Aguiar, UF leader, to visit the Rupununi Savannahs, the area bordering Brazil, where small ranchers and Amerindians recently revolted. Two Amerindians, one a PPP legislator and the other a PPP organiser, were ejected from the area.

The expulsion of the UF from the Government had led to a changed political situation. The more reactionary and anti-communist in the leadership of the UF have moved to the PNC. The rest of the leadership, though pro-imperialist in ideology, and the rank-and-file, have been forced into a position of hostility to the US-puppet PNC regime. In this respect, the balance of forces has certainly changed. The PPP's attitude to the UF is one of unity and struggle—struggle against those who vacillate and support imperialism, and unity with those who will fight in defence of democracy and freedom.

A growing contradiction is developing also between the elitist leadership and the rank-and-file of the PNC. The PNC leadership, largely middle-class and capitalist bureaucratic, is neither psychologically nor ideologically opposed to US economic, military and political domination. It is prepared to play the role of a ruling elite, while foreign vested interests control the commanding heights of the economy—factories, mines, plantations, banks, insurance, shipping and foreign trade.

(*A concluding section of this article will be published next month.*)

FREE UNIVERSITY?

Ron Bellamy

Senior Lecturer in Economics, University of Leeds

A NEW feature of the British scene in higher education during this last year has been the demand for 'institutions free of state control.' From the right came the much-publicised open letter signed by many senior academics (including a few who have in other fields supported liberal-democratic causes) calling for a 'free university', to be sustained by private endowment and by fee-paying students. From some sections on the left (both here and abroad) has come the demand for institutions 'free of subservience to monopoly capital,' in some cases concretely for 'red universities' where a Marxist standpoint would infuse all teaching. Diagnosis of the causes of these trends necessarily precedes any realistic alternative.

Higher education has expanded substantially in the last decade. The near panic introduced in the United States by Sputnik I of 1957

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was reflected in Britain also. The scientific technical revolution required a large increase in skilled manpower, above all in technology. But now that students and potential students have voted with their feet for the arts and the social sciences the always limited enthusiasm of the ruling class for educational expansion is more muted. Scientists, technologists, computer analysts, statisticians and experts in business management—these are one thing. But a general expansion in opportunities for higher education as a matter of democratic right—that is quite another. As the rising costs conflicted with the higher priorities—of overseas investment and overseas obligations—so the educational expansion became more selective and its priorities more carefully controlled. Money was to be sought from private industry, public money to be used more efficiently and the assembly line more fully utilised to convert the raw material into a standardised product. Public accountability was tightened, particular ministries (including the Ministry of Defence) offered earmarked funds to offset the general deprivation, while the Social Science Research Council intervened in the post-graduate sector. From the sleeves of a benevolent granny, hitherto dispensing opportunities for experiment (and promotion), now appeared the demanding claws of a far from benevolent state. As the previous 'waste and extravagance' were brandished before the public, those academic conservatives, who had for assorted and often contradictory reasons resisted expansion, proposed to replace student grants by loans and acquiesced in the narrow and anti-humanist conceptions of the manpower technocrats.

In this context it was not surprising if very diverse trends temporarily coalesced to call for the 'free university'—as free, of course, as the public schools are public. It is still not clear what response big business will make (the Rockefeller Foundation has just heavily financed two business schools—within the state sector); it may be that some of the liberal-free-market economists who were prominent among the sponsors will settle for restrictive trends within an exclusively state sector supported increasingly by private endowments for research, while others may move closer towards a progressive solution of their legitimate frustrations.

The trends on the left have perhaps learned by now—from some initial experience in both New York and London—that the material requirements of *full-time* education at university level are such as to preclude success for 'red' universities, except for a very small number of students, in a very limited number of fields (outside science and technology), and then only if financed by large and determined

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organisations within the working-class movement. There is a history in Britain of attempts to establish such organisations, from the emergence of the National Council of Labour Colleges out of Ruskin, and the later setting-up by some trade unions of their own educational programmes outside the state subsidised Workers' Education Association and Workers' Education Trade Union Committee or outside the TUC when they found the content of their teaching unacceptable. On a political plane there has been the Left Book Club discussion groups and the Labour Monthly groups. In continental Europe the communist parties have organised larger schemes (the French Communist Party (PCF)'s Universitaire Populaire, now in existence, and the Gramsci Institute of the Italian Communist Party (CPI), to say nothing of schools in many countries). Now while it is true that a considerable sector of higher education in this country (as indeed also in the socialist countries) is of a part-time nature, through evening classes and correspondence-course work, that work which has been organised by the labour movement with its own funds has not surprisingly been confined to activities connected with its functions, and has been either for the training of a small cadre of officials or more widely within the social sciences.

Attempts to form 'red' universities outside the state sector (and even more within the state sector) were from the outset likely to fail. Indeed it ought to be said that however sincere and courageous their motivation, they represented an immature, not to say utopian, escape from the long, difficult and entirely unavoidable task of struggle for a more democratic higher education within the state sector. I intend the word 'democratic' here in a double sense—first that it should guarantee to working people and their daughters and sons the right to use the fruits of their labour for their own mental and spiritual development and, second, that since universal higher education is not yet on the agenda those who have enjoyed it should be equipped by it to increase the skill and capacity for life of the rest of the population.

It is important to stress this conception, in my opinion, not only as a matter of general strategy (in relation both to socialist society and our own), but especially at this moment when a reactionary backlash against educational advance is attempting to make demagogic play of 'educational privileges enjoyed by a small minority.' For if students, or intellectuals generally, argue for complete freedom to plan their work as they please (while supported by public funds) without reference to social priorities, they will become alienated

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from the mass of our people who are manual workers, to whom work is still very much of the nature of 'work', and very little of the kind of activity which could be 'a prime necessity of life'. Of course it is true that in modern capitalist society all training of students and all work of intellectuals is constrained by its performance within a framework of 'aims dictated by monopoly capital'. But not all intellectual work is concerned directly with the production or transmission of ideology; and even where it is, it is performed in a context of struggle where the working people are also putting forward their demands. In this context it seems to me perfectly possible to put forward demands for, and make considerable progress towards, a situation where Marxism shall be seriously studied and where Marxists among both staff and students shall not be constrained or penalised compared with those who hold other views. This is a democratic demand and while, like many other democratic demands, it will not be wholly achieved except under socialism, opposition to it is, like sin, seldom publicly to be confessed.

Against the power of private wealth and of the state within monopoly capitalism the forces of staff and students within the university which want democratisation of their structure and of their activity can never succeed without the aid of the forces of democracy from outside. Hence the so-called 'free university' of the right is in fact (however silken the strings) an institution committed to the ideals of big business; the free university of the left is unfortunately committed to still birth. Only by full recognition of their obligations to the needs of working people can the staff and students mobilise enough strength to begin the conversion of present institutions to truly free universities.

Correspondence: Fifty Years of the World Revolution

AS LATE AS MAY 1917 Lenin still believed that the socialist revolution would take place simultaneously in several countries. Hence, in *War and Revolution*, the thrice repeated idea that 'the only way to end the war is by a workers' revolution in several countries' (*Collected Works*, Vol. 24, pp. 419-420).

But by October, when experience had shown that the Russian Revolution was to be the first, he stated: 'We do not know how soon after our victory revolution will sweep the West' (Op. cit., Vol. 26, p. 171).

Again, at the Third Congress of Soviets in January 1918 he said: 'Things have turned out differently from what Marx and Engels expected and we, the Russian working and exploited classes, have the honour of being the vanguard of the international socialist revolution . . . The Russians began it—the German, the Frenchman

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and the Englishman will finish it' (ibid. p. 472).

In view of the above sequence of Lenin's formulations on the subject it seems rather churlish for *Notes of the Month* (*LM*, March 1969) to lambaste 'bourgeois "historians" and "experts"' who, in essence, have simply noted this rapid change in Lenin's ideas on this subject in tl course of months. There cannot be the slightest doubt from the above that Lenin rapidly moved away from the idea of simultaneous revolutions—because experience forced him to—and it would surely have been wiser to sketch this evolution rather than to try to refute the 'bourgeois' with a quotation from 1918 that implies that, until then, Lenin had never uttered a word on the subject. This sort of 'defence' of Lenin does not enhance the image of Marxism-Leninism.

PAT SLOAN

R.P.D. replies:

OUR CORRESPONDENT, whose record of invaluable service in the cause of British-Soviet friendship is well-known to readers, has here completely missed the point. The controversy to which reference was made in the *Notes* turns on Lenin's estimate of the situation *after* the October revolution, not before. Hence his collection of familiar extracts before the October revolution is irrelevant. There is no evidence in Lenin's writings or speeches that 'as late as May, 1917, Lenin still believed that a socialist revolution would take place simultaneously in several countries.' Such 'beliefs' were quite foreign to Lenin's dialectical way of thinking. He envisaged the possibility of the socialist revolution winning first in a single country, when he wrote in 1915:

'Uneven economic and political development is an absolute law of capitalism. Hence the victory of socialism is possible, first in a few, or even in one single capitalist country.' (Lenin, *The United States of Europe Slogan*, 1915).

What Lenin was speaking of in his lecture of May 27, 1917, quoted by Sloan, was not the *general* question or anticipation of how socialist revolutions would or could come, but the answer to the concrete immediate question of how the imperialist war which began in 1914 could be ended. It was in this connection that, replying *both* to the jingo socialists and to the pacifists, he insisted that the only way to end the imperialist war was by a workers' revolution in several countries. He had already defined this viewpoint in his speech introducing the resolution on the war at the Seventh Party Conference on May 10:

'This war can be terminated by a democratic peace *only* if the entire state power, in at least several of the belligerent countries, has passed to the class of the proletarians and semi-proletarians which is really capable of putting an end to the oppressive rule of capital.'

At the same time in the same speech he went on to warn specifically against any assumptions or anticipations of the future course or timing of revolutionary development in other countries:

'To say "a revolution has taken place in one country, so now it must take place in Germany"—is false reasoning . . . Revolutions can not be made, they cannot be taken in turns . . . The revolution is mounting in every country, but no one knows to what extent it is mounting and when it will break out.'

Consistently with this approach, he specifically envisaged the possible concrete situation of the victory of the socialist revolution not being followed by socialist revolutions in other countries:

'We are asked: If the revolutionary class takes power in Russia, and if

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no uprisings break out in other countries, what will the revolutionary party do? What will happen then? This question is answered in the last paragraph of our resolution.'

Thus, so far from 'believing in May, 1917, that a socialist revolution would take place simultaneously in several countries,' he set out the concrete policy to be pursued by a socialist Russia in the event of the socialist revolution not extending to other countries. Such was the realist outlook of Lenin in May, 1917.

But the controversy referred to in the *Notes* was on the perspective after the victory of the October revolution, during the difficult Brest negotiations ('the alleged fond illusions of Lenin and the Bolsheviks who are supposed to have expected that the victory of the October revolution in 1917 would be immediately followed by the extension of the socialist revolution to the other leading capitalist countries within the next few years'). Trotsky and the Left Communists did base their strategy on the expectation of the speedy extension of the socialist revolution to Western Europe, and even saw the survival of the Soviet Republic as dependent on the fulfilment of this expectation. Lenin, who looked as eagerly as any for every sign of the gathering of the socialist revolution in Western Europe, castigated without mercy those who sought to base short-term strategy on this assumption, and in this sense described those who counted on the 'international world revolution' for the solution of present problems as believers in 'a fairy tale'. The fault of the conventional bourgeois mythology in their current press, radio and television treatment of the Russian revolution is that the views of Trotsky and the Left Communists are ascribed to Lenin.

BOOKS

New Directions in Australian Foreign Policy
Edited by Max Teichmann
Penguin Books, 212 pp., 6s.

IT WAS NOT UNTIL 1940, after the Second World War had broken out, that the first Australian diplomatic mission to a foreign country was opened, significantly in the United States, with the appointment of R. G. Casey as Australian Minister in Washington. But this did not mean the beginning of an independent Australian foreign policy. The appointment of Casey marked the acceptance of Australian subordination to American policy and the end of the long era of British control of Australian foreign affairs and of relations between Australia and Great Britain.

In recent times Australian foreign policy has increasingly come under scrutiny, particularly since the American escalation of the war in Vietnam and the resulting increased Australian commitment. The American defeats have shown the 'patent disadvantages of being an active American ally,' in the words of Max Teichmann, the editor of *New Directions*.

New Directions, a collection of lectures originally delivered at the Victorian Fabian Society's annual conference in 1967, demolishes many of the assumptions underlying Australia's aggressive role in Vietnam. The alleged threat to Australia from the North is shown to be fallacious, a justification for supporting the American war. This particular bogeyman has just about dropped out of even the Australian press and is now rarely cited by government leaders.

Yet the Gorton Government clings to its belief in a 'permanent Australian presence' in Asia, naturally alongside

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the USA which it does not want to see leave Vietnam. Indeed the newly appointed Minister of External Affairs, Freeth, a politician not noted for any finesse, recently said that Australia should adopt a policeman's role in South East Asia. (*Australian*, February 14, 1969)

Whitlam, the leader of the Australian Labour Party, is far too American-oriented to produce an alternative policy but the Communists and strong left wing in the ALP have been campaigning for a policy of freeing Australia from American economic and military overlordship. The participation of so many distinguished Australian academics in *New Directions* is an indication that the search for a new, independent foreign policy is not confined to the left. While no contributor fully supports such a policy, nevertheless the book as a whole is a valuable step in that direction. JUDAH WATEN.

Monopoly and Restrictive Practices

G. C. Allen

Allen & Unwin, 184 pp., 36s.

THIS BOOK SAYS NOTHING of monopoly capitalism as concentration of power dominating political, financial and economic policies. It is a book about the behaviour of firms or groups of firms that control or seek to control particular markets, the limits to their ability to do so and the regulatory measures introduced in British and other capitalist administrations. As such it is a valuable book written with brevity and skill and based on first-hand experience and acute observation by a participant in the administrative apparatus of the British state. JOHN EATON

The People's Republic

Obafemi Awolowo

Oxford University Press, 356 pp., 90s.

THE BIGGEST ISSUE now facing 56 million people in Nigeria is the disastrous war between the federal armed forces and Biafra. This was launched by General Gowon in July 1967. The preface to this book was written in May 1968, but there is not a single word about this tragic conflict. This in itself gives some clue why the author fails to face the real issues facing the people of Nigeria.

Despite this, it is an interesting book. So is the author himself, who has had a long career as a political leader. In 1940 he was secretary of the Ibadan Branch of the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM), was closely involved with Yoruba tribalism in his early days (and still to some extent) and founded the Action Group before Nigeria had its first elections under the 1951 Macpherson Constitution.

Along with Dr. Azikiwe, leader of the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) and Sir Abubakr Balewa, leading figure in the Northern People's Congress (NPC), Awolowo became one of the 'big three', between whom there were sharp conflicts during discussions in London between 1953 and 1958 on the terms of successive British constitutions imposed upon Nigeria.

Arising from the 1959 pre-independence elections the NPC and NCNC formed a coalition federal government, with the Action Group in opposition, giving the appearance of a more progressive policy and the aim of 'democratic socialism'. Sharp political conflicts arose within the Action Group between Chief Akintola and Awolowo, the Western Assembly (with an Action Group majority) was suspended by the federal government, and after a period of emergency rule Chief Akintola reassumed his position as Premier in the western region.

The next step was to concoct framed-up charges against Awolowo, who was sentenced to ten years and

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was still in prison at the time of the armed coup in January 1966. When General Gowon took over military control in July 1966 Awolowo was released and is now the Vice-President of the Federal Executive Council.

This background is extremely relevant in any judgment of Awolowo's recent book. Before 1959 the Action Group, under his leadership, had distinct trends towards tribalism and separatism, with a reactionary and anti-socialist standpoint. This was changed when the Action Group became the 'opposition' from 1959 onwards to the nebulous programme of 'democratic socialism'.

From this angle there is little new in the book. The first part is historical (up to 1959) and extremely critical of the northern feudal emirs. The author asserts (rightly in my view) that British strategy gave them the dominant political position in Nigeria. But Awolowo does not explain his alliance with them in the war now being waged against Biafra, which is battling for its right to self-determination so much advocated by the author.

The origin and nature of capitalism is described in the most hazy terms. Its germ is greed, which has 'always been inherent in man', and is not only a method of production but 'an attitude of mind'. Even more hazy is the concept of 'democratic socialism', which lags behind even the concepts of utopian socialism of the 19th century.

There is a long chapter on the constitutional future of Nigeria, in which it is claimed there are 51 'nations'. Ten of these are major nations proposed as separate states. The 41 smaller nations should form seven states between them, making 17 states in all, as against the present twelve. After all, I suppose it is easier to argue on paper about the number of 'nations' in Nigeria and how many states should exist, than to make a stand for the right of the existing state of Biafra to self-determination.

IDRIS COX

Captain Swing

E. J. Hobsbawm and George Rudé

Lawrence & Wishart, 384 pp., 70s.

THIS BOOK gives a vivid and stimulating account of the great movement of protest and revolt by agricultural workers in 1830, which in a matter of months swept through 23 counties from Kent to Worcestershire, and from Norfolk to Dorset. Marching from village to village, armed with hammers and crowbars, hundreds of workers confronted the farmers with their demand for a minimum of two shillings per day, and proceeded to smash the threshing machines which deprived them of the greater part of their winter employment. At one and the same time, they demanded reductions in rents from the landlords, and reductions in tithes from the clergy, so that the farmers could afford the increase in wages. Whilst ricks burned at night, threatening letters circulated, signed by the mythical leader 'Captain Swing'. Yet no violence was done to persons, and the worst that happened to an unyielding Poor Law Overseer was a ducking in the village pond. So forceful were the actions of the workers that at first opposition crumbled and their demands were widely accepted, with some farmers even dismantling their own threshing machines.

The background to this great outburst was the steadily worsening condition of the farmworker since the Napoleonic wars. He had been robbed of his land and grazing rights by generations of enclosures, and his cottage industries had been undermined by the industrial revolution.

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The old system of annual hiring, which had given him a measure of security, was being replaced by weekly and even daily contracts, with frequent unemployment. As corn prices fell after the battle of Waterloo, wages were lowered until men and their families were literally starving, whilst the hated Poor Law, which was supposed to provide minimum subsistence out of the rates, encouraged the farmer to lower wages still further. In this desperate situation, which, as the men saw it, 'was contrary to all natural justice', the actions of a few bold groups in Kent spread like wildfire from village to village and county to county, rocking the countryside to its foundations.

But it was not long before the ruling classes hit back with troops, forces of special constables and widespread arrests. 2,000 workers were brought to trial, of whom 19 were executed, 491 transported and 644 imprisoned. These savage sentences provoked widespread protest but were not finally commuted for 15 or 20 years. For a time the wage increases were retained but the downward pressures soon returned and it was only four years later that the Tolpuddle Martyrs were transported for forming the first Agricultural Workers' Trade Union. A more lasting effect was that threshing machines were not widely used for another 20-30 years.

By their detailed research, Eric Hobsbawm and George Rudé have demonstrated the extent and significance of this great movement. They have shown the role of cobblers, blacksmiths and other village craftsmen in the spread of ideas and in providing some of the leaders. They have carefully reconstructed the feelings and aims which inspired the men, and the terrors of revolution which haunted the rich. The maps, charts and tables, and the very valuable appendix, combine to convey an accurate picture of what took place.

The book can be strongly recommended to supporters of the labour movement in town and country, and to the farmers and farm workers of today. Right up to the present, the farm worker has remained at the bottom of the wages ladder, and the industry as a whole suffers from the pressure of monopoly combines on the one hand and government policy designed to provide the industrial worker with cheap food on the other. *Captain Swing* made me feel the power of direct action in the countryside—a power which could be wielded with great effect today. It also brought home to me the inevitable defeat of direct action unless sustained by strong and united forms of organisation.

MARGARET BRAMLEY

Selected Works of Marx and Engels
Lawrence & Wishart, 800 pp., 63s.

THESE SELECTIONS from the voluminous works of Marx and Engels present the essentials of their thinking.

The shorter fundamental works are given in full, including *The Communist Manifesto; Wage Labour and Capital; Wages, Prices and Profit; The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte; The Civil War in France; The Critique of the Gotha Programme; Socialism, Utopian and Scientific; Ludwig Feuerbach;* and *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State.*

Included also are a number of important articles, reviews, prefaces, and a selection from the *Correspondence*, consisting of letters in which Marx and Engels dealt with fundamental questions of theory. Marx's *Capital* is represented by the Preface and the key chapter on 'Capitalist Accumulation'.

As an introduction the volume opens with three essays on the significance of Marxism by Lenin.

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MAKE SURE OF IT

ON a visit to Glasgow at the beginning of April, one of the most pleasant episodes was a conversation with some trade union readers of *Labour Monthly* who were on the Glasgow stage of the All Britain March.

The assertion made by one of them, that 'Of course, all the active trade unionists in this area are *Labour Monthly* readers,' sparked off a rapid exchange of comments:

'Are you sure that's so?'

'Well, they all should be!'

Conclusion: However certain you are of the hundred per cent readership among people in your area whose work in the unions means they are probably all readers already, try checking up on them. This is the best time to introduce new readers to the journal. Make sure every 'should-be' reader becomes a subscriber. And while you are asking around, you may be able to get a much needed donation or two to swell the Fund.

NICOLA SEYD

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